Remark of Pakistan President on Kashmir

2958. SHRI SURESH KALMADI :

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the reported remarks of Pakistan President Rafiq Tarar's description of Kashmir as crucial to that country's survival on the occasion of Pakistan's National Day ;

(b) if so, Government's views on the subject ; and

(c) steps taken to make Pakistan to understand our position on the subject unambiguously ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Government have seen the reported remarks of the Pakistan President.

These remarks emphasise the fragility of Pakistan's polity, as they underline Pakistan's active encouragement and sponsorship of cross-border terrorism.

The entire State of Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. A part of the territory of the State is under Pakistan's illegal and forcible occupation. India is committed to resolve all outstanding issues with Pakistan in accordance with the Simla Agreement. Pakistan needs to demonstrate its adherence to the agreement through an abandonment of its cross-border terrorism in Jasmmu & Kashmir and elsewhere in India and its hostile propaganda against India. This position has been made known to Pakistan through word and deed.

Government remains firm in their resolve to take all necessary measures to preserve the security and territorial integrity of the country.

Sovereignty for Kashmir

2959. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "US Body moots sovereignty for Kashmir" published in the Hindustan Times dated 19th March, 2000 ;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto ; and

(c) whether it is a fact that the proposals framed by the New York based Kashmir Study Group were circulated to Indian Government which gave favourable response to the same as mentioned in the above newsitem ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Yes, Sir. Government have seen the news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated 19th March, 2000.

(b) Government does not take cognizance of or react to studies or reports prepared by a group of private individuals in other country.

(c) No, Sir. The State of Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. A part of the territory of the State is under the illegal and forcible occupation of Pakistan. India is committed to a resolution of all outstanding issues with Pakistan through peaceful discussions as envisaged in the Simla Agreement.

Charging of Property Tax from Embassies in New Delhi

2960. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH "SURYA" : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have received any proposal from the NDMC for charging property tax from the Embassies in New Delhi area ;

(b) if so, Government's response thereto ;

(c) whether Indian missions are paying such taxes in other countries ; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In accordance with Article 23 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, to which India is a signatory, the sending State and the Head of Mission is exempted from payment of all national, regional or municipal dues and taxes in respect of all the premises of the mission whether owned or leased other than such as represent payment for specific services rendered.

(c) and (d) the requisite information are not kept in a centralised method in Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi.